OSPREY MILITARY

MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES 57

THE ZULU WAR

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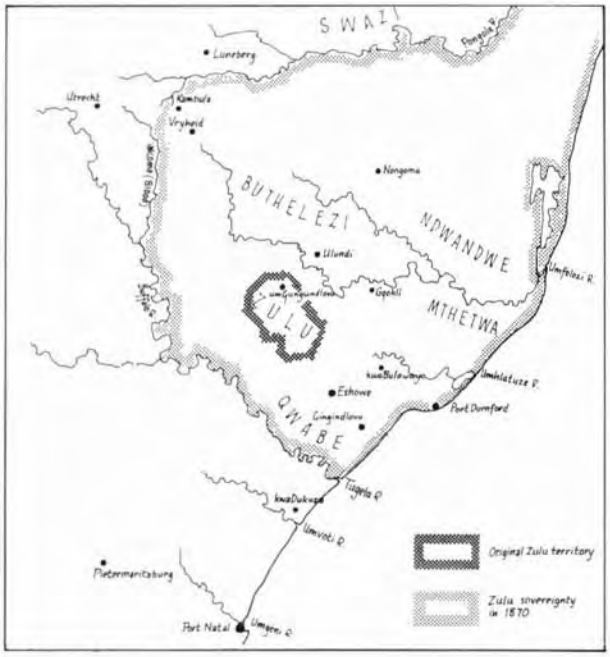
Introduction

By the end of the nineteenth century the fame of the Zulu was world-wide, and their army was one of the few non-European military organisations to have become the subject of serious historical study. Their very name is still synonymous with bravery, discipline and military skill.

Zulu territory changed in two generations from an area of 1200 square miles to a huge expanse twelve times as great, reaching from the region round Utrecht and Luneberg in the west, to the eastern coastline; and from the Pongola River in the north to the Tugela River in the south. The boundaries were not fixed and were maintained only by war; beyond them at one stage lay a great depopulated no-man's land. The map shows the extent of the Zulu empire at its greatest, with the places and towns mentioned in the text and the chief rivers.



Some slight confusion might arise through modern Zulu spelling. For instance 'Shaka' is nowadays the correct form, not 'Chaka' or 'Tshaka'. Likewise 'Cetshwayo' (pronounced 'ɪet-chwah-yaw'— ɪ' denoting a dental click sound) now replaces 'Cetywayo' and other earlier variants. It should be noted that 'Dingane' is pronounced as 'dingah-neh' (not 'dingayn').

Zulu vowels are pure, as in Italian. Many consonants sound as in English, but beware of the following:- *ph* and *th* are like *p* and *t* (not as in 'phone' and 'throne'); *g* is always hard, as in 'gone'; *hl* is like Welsh *ll*, and *dl* is its voiced counterpart; *c*, *q* and *x* represent dental, palatal and lateral 'clicks' or tongue-suction sounds. For example, the '*c*' click is like dislodging a pip from between the upper front teeth, or expressing annoyance (sometimes written, double, in English, as 'tsk-tsk'). The '*q*' click is like our imitation of horses' hooves, while '*x*' is the old English carter's sound for 'gee up' (or, more recently, an alternative to a 'wolf whistle'). Short of consulting a Zulu, further details may be had from a Zulu grammar or dictionary.

Rise of the Zulu

In 1778 Senzangakhona, chief of the small Zulu clan of the Nguni people, illegitimately fathered a boy called Shaka. Shaka and his mother were an embarrassment to the Zulu, and were banished from their *umuzi* (village) to live among the Mthethwa under king Dingiswayo. Shaka attained manhood in exile east of the Zulu homeland, and as was the custom among the Mthethwa he was enrolled with his *intanga* (age-group) in the isiCwe regiment in Dingiswayo's army. The Mthethwa king's policy of expansion gave the army much to do, and Shaka—over six feet tall, strong and ruthless—proved a formidable soldier. In a short while he attracted a personal following within the isiCwe, and starting with them he taught a new

A Zulu warrior, from Racinet, 'Costume Historique', 1876. The smaller figure is wrongly identified in Racinet as a 'Basuto', but is actually a Bechuana. The shield is of a type seen in Bushman paintings in rock-shelters of the earliest Bantu invaders of S. Africa.
The Zulu (left) is surprisingly accurate and is probably taken from early photographs.

kind of warfare, rejecting the usual hit-and-run tactics customary in Nguni society and substituting a policy of bold hand-to-hand combat, vigorous pursuit and merciless, often wholesale, slaughter. Mthethwa expansion increased rapidly as the surrounding clans recoiled from Shaka's methods.

Against the Buthelezi to the west in 1810, and the Ndwandwe to the north at Nongoma in 1812, Shaka initiated an encircling tactic, drawing up the Mthethwa in 'horns', *izimpondo*, and 'chest', *isifuba*, and winning swift and decisive victories.

On Senzangakhona's death in 1816 Shaka returned from exile, swept aside all opposition, and became king of the Zulu. His first act was to form a small army of four regiments and lead them against the Buthelezi again. The Buthelezi were massacred.

In 1818 Shaka took on the Ndwandwe at Gqokli Hill and achieved another great victory against heavy odds. His territory expanded, his following swelled regiment by regiment and his methods set the pattern of Zulu warfare for the next ninety years.

In common with all the Nguni people the Zulu were pastoralists, their economy chiefly a cattle economy, their society patriarchal and partly nomadic, and centred on the circular *umuzi* whose size varied according to that of the clan. So important were cattle to them that compared with the bare dozen or so words in English for different forms of cattle, the Zulu tongue has over three hundred.

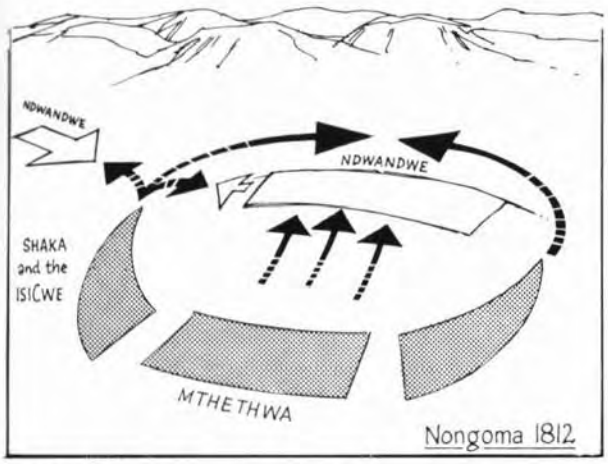
Shaka used every aspect of Nguni life as a weapon in his service. The habit of obedience became subservience, his judicial power became tyranny, and he eliminated all rebellion swiftly and brutally.

The pressures created by Zulu expansion set up a chain-reaction of tribal movements with terrible consequences. The outermost waves of the great upheaval, the Mfecane, ran up against expanding European interests in the south, and a series of border wars—'Kaffir' Wars—resulted. Fugitive chieftains such as Mshweshwe (Moshesh) and Mzilikazi founded nations of their own, the ba Sotho (Basuto) and Matabele, with far-reaching effects. A huge arc of devastation soon lay around Shaka's dominion; at its centre the Zulu grew rich in cattle, their army numbering at least 20,000 men by 1828, and the most formidable power in Black Africa.

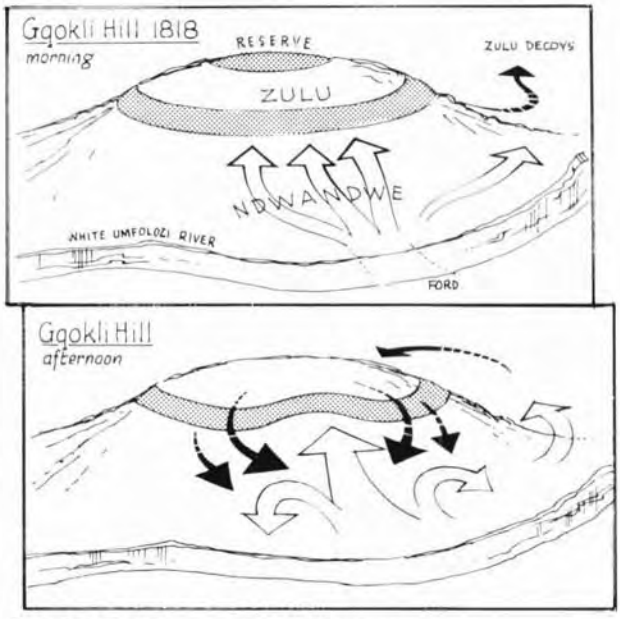
In 1824 came the first real contacts between Zulu and European. Founder members of the Natal Trading Company, H. F. Fynn and Lt. Farewell, obtained a warrant from Shaka to occupy part of his territory, and founded Port Natal, later to become Durban.

In 1828 Shaka was assassinated and succeeded by Dingane, whose reign was characterised by hostilities between the Zulu and the Trek Boers. The murder of the Boer leader Retief was avenged by a Boer victory on the Ncome (Blood) River in which the Zulu suffered heavy losses. The Boers contested Natal with the British but were ousted by 1848, leaving the British mainly responsible for European-Zulu contacts.

Dingane was succeeded by Mpande in 1838. Although he was a peaceable man and they had little to do, thirty-two regiments were formed under Mpande—twenty of them during the period when his nephew Cetshwayo was the effective but uncrowned ruler. Mpande's position was insecure, and the chiefship was disputed by Cetshwayo and



Shaka and the isiCwe: Nongoma, 1812.



Gqokli Hill 1818—morning and afternoon.

his half-brother Mbuyazi. The British backed Mbuyazi in their attempts to secure their position in Natal, but their candidate was defeated and his minority faction massacred, leaving Cetshwayo king of the Zulu and British-Zulu relations permanently soured.

Regiments

Shaka adapted Dingiswayo's method of recruitment, and set up a rigidly-enforced system whereby a large number of trained men were always available for war, automatically reinforced by annual additions and involving almost all the adult male Zulu population.

The raising of a regiment, *ibutho*, among the Nguni originally stemmed from the formation of circumcision guilds or age-groups. Although the operation was abolished among the Zulu in Shaka's time, the age-grouping remained, and as each group of boys reached puberty their ear-lobes were pierced in a collective ceremony marking them as members of an age-group, *intanga*, who tended to remain together from then on. An older boy was placed in charge of each *intanga*, becoming their leader until enrolment in a regiment, and their immediate officer throughout their subsequent military career. The *intanga* formed a company, *iviyo*, in that regiment.

As each *intanga* reached the age of twenty it would be enrolled in a local 'head', *ikhanda*, of perhaps forty or fifty men, to await the next First-Fruits ceremony and a summons from the king to appear at the royal residence. Many 'heads' might be summoned together, enough to form a regiment.

While awaiting the summons older men taught basic duties and skills, hut-building, field-cooking and so on, and made mental notes of any youths under their care who excelled in the perpetual drills and mock battles that were organised, giving promising youngsters their first praise-names, *izibongo*. Once given a praise-name, a Zulu was entitled to use it through life, although it was considered bad form to do so in the presence of older warriors.

The formation and naming of a regiment took place at the King's residence. Men of the same age-group from a wide area assembled in lines, by 'heads', in new uniform but armed only with spears. Any chance event or royal fancy might give rise to a name, and some names—amaPhela, 'cockroaches', or uFasimba, 'haze'—reflected the Zulu's wry sense of humour.

The regiment would usually begin with black or predominantly black shields which were provided by the king and made from the hides of a royal herd set aside for the occasion.

Because of variations in the birth rate, or the casualties of war, one or another *intanga* was assigned to reinforce existing regiments. Thus some regiments came to be made up of a wide range of

Shaka

Raised	*Name*		*Shield* (where known)
1816	amaWombe	or umBelebele, after H.Q.	White.
1816	uDubinhlangu	or inTontela, uJubingqwanga (reduced to boy's status).	Black.
1816	umGamule	uDlambedlu (with uDubinhlangu forming izimPohlo).	Black-and-white.
1816	uFasimba	'Haze'; H.Q. kwaBulawayo.	Black.
1819	umGumanqa	'Watching for vagabonds'.	—
1821–26	inDabankulu	Despatched by Shaka to follow Mzilikazi. Included izimPohlo.	
1821–26	imFolozi		Mostly black.
1821–26	uFojisa		
1821–26	uGibabanye		Mostly white.
1821–27	iziZimazana		
1821–27	amaKhwenkwe	umBelebele division; included amaWombe.	White with
1821–27	uNomdayana		black patches.
1821–27	amaPhela		Red.
1821–27	uMbonambi	H.Q. near the coast.	Black, white spots.
1821–27	uNteke		—
1821–27	isiPhezi	H.Q. in Qwabeland.	—
1823	uDlangezwa	'Unfeeling devourers'.	—
1828	iziNyosi	'Bees'.	White, one black spot.

Dingane

1828	iziBawu	'Gad flies'; Shakan remnants.	—
1828	uHlomedlini	'Homeguards'; Natal repatriates.	—
1829	uDlambedlu	'One who eats with fierce impatience'. Re-formed; H.Q. isiKlebe.	Black-and-white.
1833	umKhulutshane	or inDlavini, isiGulutshane.	White.
1836	umHaye	Forming the imVokwe, 'subjects'.	—
1837	iHlaba	'Prickly aloe'.	—
1838	uKhokhothi		—

Mpande

1841	iNdabakawombe	Mpande's favourite regiment.	White.
1843	uDlambedlu	Re-formed again; also umDlenevu and izinGwegwe.	Black.
1844	iNgulube	Headringed 1854.	—
1845	iNkone		—
1846–51	umKhuze	Incorporated in iNdabakawombe.	Collectively
1846–51	uNongamulana		amaPhela,
1846–51	umZwangwenya	Incorporated in uDlambedlu.	'Cockroaches'.
1846–51	umSikaba	or umZinyathi, 'Buffalo village'.	Red shields.
1852	isAngqu	'Orange River' or 'White-tails'; also amaShishi.	White.

1854	uThulwana	'Dust-raisers'	White.
1855	isiBabule	'Sulphur'	
1856	iNkonkoni	'Wildebeeste'	
1857	inDlondlo	'Poisonous snakes' (horned vipers) or uShisizwe, 'landburners', and imiDwaimba. Headringed 1876.	Red-and-white.
1858	uDloko	uGqikazi, 'Savage'.	Red; one white spot.
1859	uDududu	H.Q. at Nodwengu.	Black, white spots.
1860	iQhwa	'Frost'.	—
1861	umXhapho	'Mongrels'; or uMpunga, 'grey heads'; or uHlwayi, 'shower of shot'.	—
1862	inSukamngeni	'Starters from the Umgeni River'.	—
1862	iziPikili	'Nails'.	—
1862	umLambongwenya	'Crocodile River'.	Black.
1863	inKonyan'ebomvu	'Red calf'	Black, white spots.
1864	uBhewula	'Wild men'	
1864	inDwali		
1864	iShudu		
1865	uNqakamatshe	'Big as stones'.	
1865	uNokhenke		Black.
1866	iNdluyengwe	'Leopard's lair'; H.Q. Ondini; incorporated with uNqakamatshe.	Black, one white spot.
1867	umHlanga	'Reeds'	Black, one white spot.
1867	umCijo	'Sharp points'; uKhandempemvu; umCitya.	Black.
1867	umThulisazwe		—
1867	iKhwentu		—
1867	imVu-emnyama	'Dark sheep'; incorporated in umLambongwenya.	—

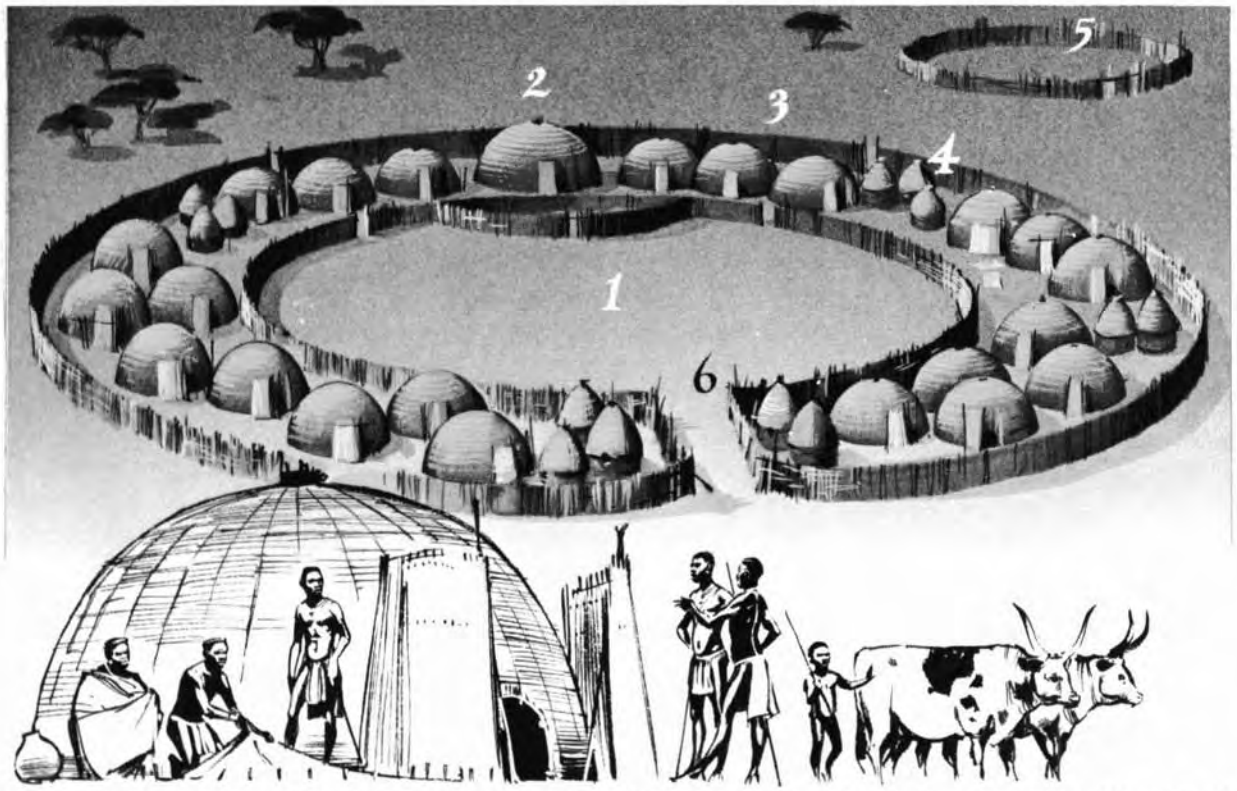
Cetshwayo

1873	inGobamakhosi	'Bender of Kings'; also uNobhongowezulu.	Black, red, black-and-white, and red-and-white.
1875	uVe	The uve bird; H.Q., Ondini.	
1878	uFalaza	'Clouds of the sky'.	

ages, in which case the young recruits were privileged to adopt the shield colour of white with black patches, or all white, that properly belonged to veterans.

The greatest *esprit de corps* was to be found among regiments formed at once from a year's intake, and there was so much rivalry between regiments that even in the royal presence it was often necessary to keep them widely separated to avoid bloodshed.

The newly-named regiment was assigned to a military village and placed under the command of an *induna* who was responsible for order and discipline. Only he was allowed to have his wife or wives with him. Occasionally an older woman of the royal family was appointed to run the military barracks, but children below puberty were strictly forbidden from the premises. The *induna* had power of life and death over the inmates of the barracks, but was not necessarily the regimental commander in battle, and might actually remain behind when the regiment went to war. Below him was a second-in-command and two wing officers each in charge



A typical Zulu *umuzi* (village). Circular or oval in plan with a large central enclosure which served as parade-ground when the *umuzi* was a barracks. The diameter of the outer fence varied from a hundred yards or less to nearly a third of a mile in the case of Dingane's capital umGungundlovu. Key: 1. Cattle enclosure, parade ground. 2. Chief's hut. 3. Chief's wife's quarters. 4. Storehouses. 5. Goats, sheep. 6. Main entrance, usually facing east.

of one half of the circular barracks. Under them were the captains of companies, *amaviyo*, each the erstwhile leader of his *intanga*, and each assisted by two or three junior officers appointed from the ranks by him.

A commander in the field, *induna enkulu*, was appointed directly by the king from among his advisers or his family. It was left to the acumen of each commander to organise his chain of command, selecting veteran indunas to lead 'Brigades' of regiments and transmitting his orders by runner. At the end of a campaign these commanders, like the Republican Romans, returned to their normal lives and duties.

It is not possible to be precise about the number of fighting men between the ages of, say, twenty to forty, in the Zulu army at any one time. There are various reasons for this, too lengthy to discuss here, of which the lack of reliable written records is but one. Some regimental strengths were estimated during the British invasion and are included here; a regiment could vary from about 500 to more than 2,000 spears. It should be noted that the custom of enrolment in an *intanga* continued long after the military function had disappeared, and regiments raised after 1880 were only nominally military organisations. Estimates of total fighting strength vary from 8,000 to 20,000 under Shaka, and from 25,000 to an exaggerated 80,000 under Cetshwayo; all should be treated with a sensible reserve.

Weapons

Zulu weapons were on the whole enlarged, improved or refined versions of those already in use among all the Nguni peoples. The basic equipment of all their soldiers was the shield-and-spear combination, although different clans placed greater emphasis on either one or the other element. Shaka's most important innovation in Zulu weaponry was a careful balance of the two, with both shield and spear made as efficient as possible. He discarded the small axes of exotic

Natal Native Contingent, part of the border guard (not to be confused with the Buffalo Border Guard, who were European) along the Tugela River, 1879. The white man in shirt sleeves is an N.C.O. Red rag just visible round heads of the men who are armed with assegais and an assortment of old rifles, some with triangular-section bayonet fixed. Just visible beyond the N.C.O. is a European officer in peaked cap and light jacket and breeches, but without riding-boots; also a heavily-bearded man with pill-box hat. (Cape Town Museum)

shapes which were common before his time. The throwing spear remained unchanged except that it became a second-class weapon; the Zulu usually carried a pair, and the hafts were slender enough not to bulk too large in the left hand.

The characteristic Shakan weapon was the short-hafted broad-bladed spear, the *iklwa*, a name whose sound described the sucking noise it made when withdrawn from an enemy's body; this could only be used effectively at close quarters, and in fact was hefted underhand more like a sword.

As a young officer in the isiCwe regiment Shaka, contemptuous of the light spears he was given, decided to create a weapon more to his liking. He took a collection of iron spearheads to a well-known smith and requested him to combine them into one large broad blade. This was done with all due solemnity, and the appropriate magic aids, and Shaka displayed the techniques of its use before his entire regiment at the earliest opportunity. His young followers were delighted, and before long the isiCwe had armed themselves with the new weapon. The finest smiths were concentrated along the White Umfolozi River and in the Nkandla Forests, and from 1812 onwards they were kept constantly busy. There was not enough iron available to maintain the high standard and large size of the prototype, but the blade of an *iklwa* was rarely less than ten inches long and it never degenerated into a mere throwing-spear. The determination required to make the best use of the *iklwa* resulted from Zulu discipline and Shaka's training methods.

To round out the offensive side of the spear-shield combination the Zulu used a range of wooden clubs, chiefly the well-known kerrie or knobkerrie, *iwisa*, made of the heaviest and hardest wood available (iron-wood if possible). Any man was capable of making such a club for himself, although the finest were treasured possessions carved and decorated by experts. The kerrie in various forms was, and still is, the commonest weapon in Zululand, and the Zulu, in common with all Bantu-speaking peoples, display great skill in its use. The African police in Natal today carry a simple version of it, and are capable of bringing down a fleeing criminal by throwing it vertically end over end so that it slams into the fugitive's back with stunning force.

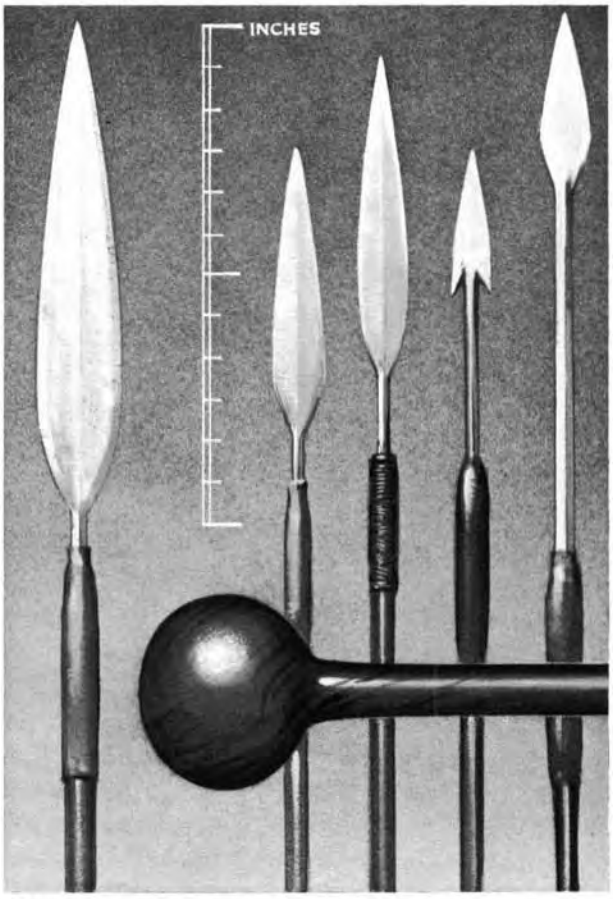
Various kinds of wooden weapon are illustrated. Only the *iwisa* was normally carried into battle under Shaka, although under his successors, particularly Cetshwayo, there were more concessions to personal taste.

The shield of the Zulu has been the subject of a great deal of speculation, and we shall attempt to correct some false impressions. It is well known that Zulu regiments could be identified by shield-

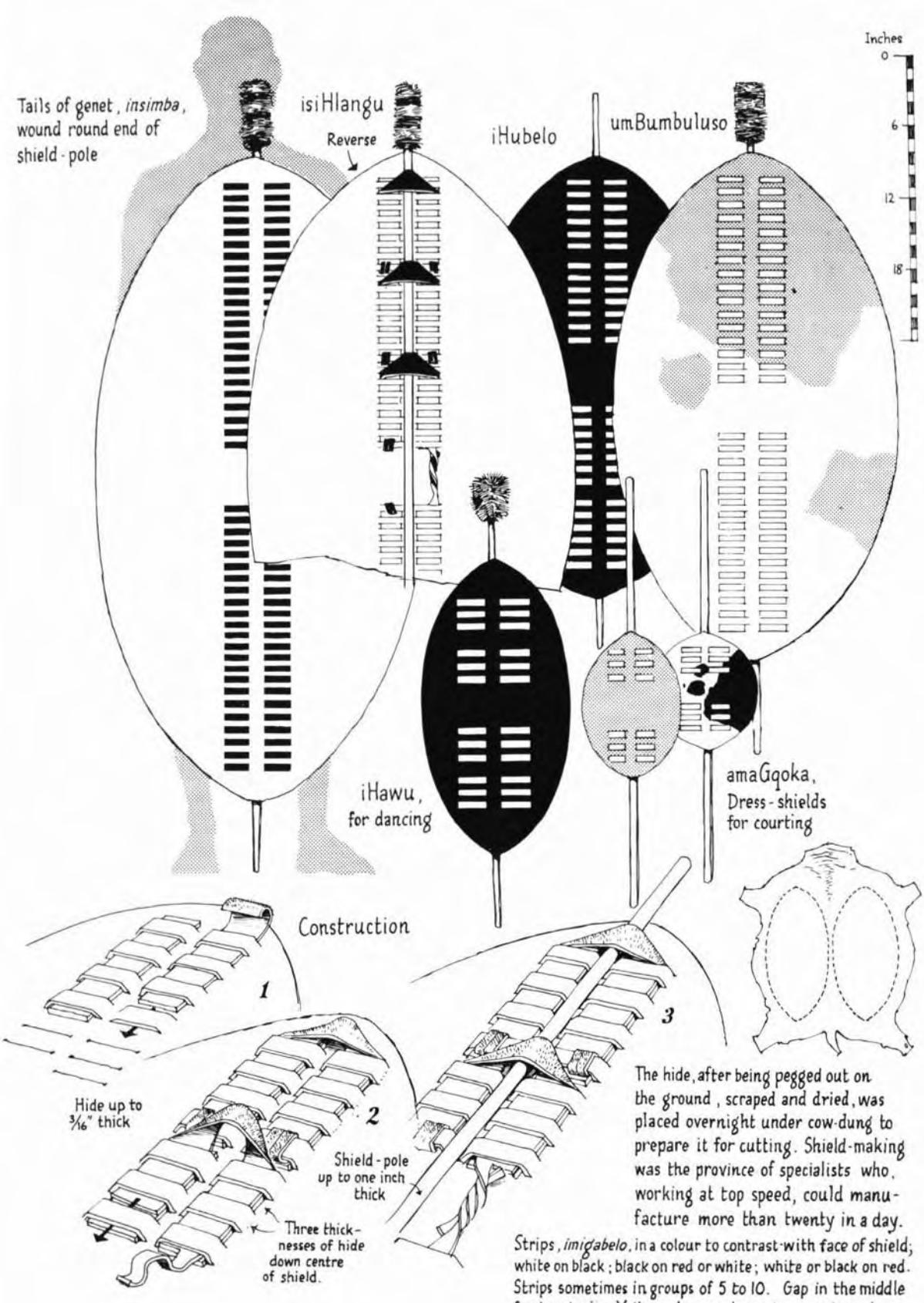
A young Zulu of about 1870 or '80 wearing a headdress to which he is almost certainly not entitled, borrowed from the photographer's stock of props. The sticks and dance-shield may well be his, the axe a family heirloom from his grandfather's time.

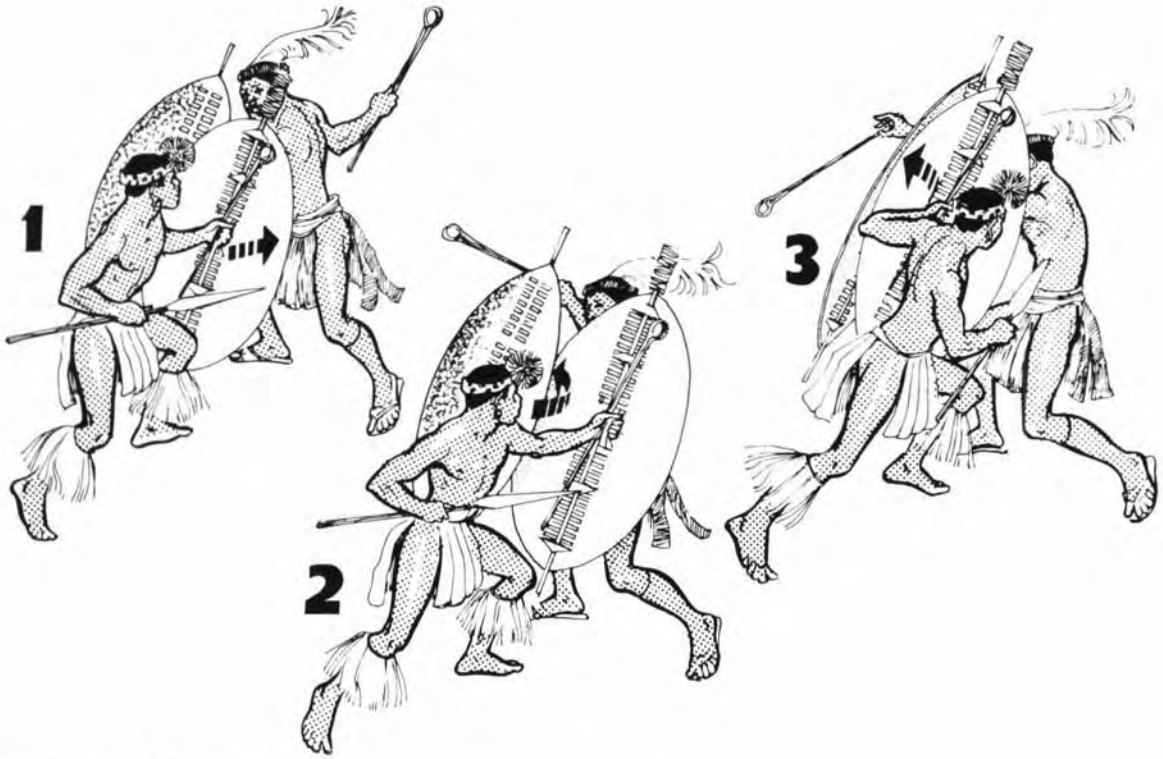
colour, yet it is disappointing to find from the earliest photographs of Zulu warriors taken in the eighteen-sixties and seventies that there seems to be very little uniformity. This is partly because by that time some of the rules established and rigidly enforced by Shaka and Dingane had been somewhat relaxed. Even the largest shields in the photographs are often nowhere near the size prescribed by Shaka, and we are indebted to such artists as Angas (drawing at first hand) for confirmation of the huge dimensions of the original shields. By Cetshwayo's time the Zulu had learned that shields were ineffective against the increasingly deadly firearm, and therefore need only be large enough to deflect blows at close quarters.

Only two large shields could be obtained from a single hide. Bull hide was preferred for its toughness, but cowhide came to be used more and more because of the ever-increasing demands of a growing army. A recent article in 'Military Modelling' suggested that there was a 'slight indentation' at the sides of the oval—a false impression gained from illustrations attempting to show the wavy edges that shields developed in the absence of a supporting framework. The method of manufacture is shown here in detail. The resulting effect, particularly from the back, is very difficult to



Zulu spear-heads: Left; the *iklwa*, ten inches or more from tip to shoulder and at least 'two fingers' in width, noticeably thicker in the centre; sometimes slightly hollow-ground. The tang rammed into a hollowed haft with resin, bound with copper wire, and covered with a tube of wet hide that contracted in drying. The haft about 3 feet long, sometimes even less, tapering slightly from head to butt and often ending in a slight 'bulb'. Right; throwing spears, small-headed and semi-expendable, the hafts up to five feet long. Also shown, the head of the *iwisa*, knob-kerrie. There were many kinds of wooden weapon, of which most were common in civilian use.


Inches
0
6
12
18
Tails of genet, *insimba*, wound round end of shield-pole
isiHlangu
Reverse
iHubelo
umBumbuluso
iHawu, for dancing
amaGqoka, Dress-shields for courting
Construction
1
2
3
Hide up to 3/16" thick
Shield-pole up to one inch thick
Three thicknesses of hide down centre of shield.
The hide, after being pegged out on the ground, scraped and dried, was placed overnight under cow-dung to prepare it for cutting. Shield-making was the province of specialists who, working at top speed, could manufacture more than twenty in a day.
Strips, *imigqabelo*, in a colour to contrast with face of shield; white on black; black on red or white; white or black on red. Strips sometimes in groups of 5 to 10. Gap in the middle for handgrip. Yellow, grey or dun colours not used.



Illustrating use of shield.

render, and consequently very few illustrations convey it correctly. For its weight and simplicity, the structure is one of the most effective hand-held shields ever devised. The central pole could be removed without dismantling the 'lacing', and the more flexible cow-hide shields could be loosely rolled and carried on the back like a back-pack on the march. A buckled or warped shield could be straightened by wetting and laying out to dry on any flat rock. In common with all non-metal equipment in Africa, the chief danger to a hide shield was destruction by ants whilst in storage, for which reason most shields and all other weapons were kept in constant use. In military barracks, the shield-pole itself was usually stuck upright in the ground outside the hut, thus providing a convenient tally of the hut's occupants at any time.

Generally speaking, young and inexperienced regiments had black shields, sometimes favoured with white spots, and the more experienced the regiment the greater the proportion of white on the shield. The Zulu were more than equal to the task of selecting and raising the matched herds of cattle required by this system. Veterans or specially-trained young regiments, such as the royal body-guard, carried all-white or nearly all-white shields.

Shaka preferred black and white, allowing only a few red shields. Dingane and particularly Mpande liked red shields, and the variations afforded by the wider use of a third colour made identification easier.

In battle the shield could be used offensively as well as defensively, the projecting pole-ends employed for feinting and jabbing, and the shield-edge for a trick taught by Shaka in which an opponent's shield was hooked aside, leaving his left flank exposed to a spear thrust (*see illus.*).

The Zulu on Campaign

At the outset of a campaign the army commander was informed of the main objectives by the king and his council of indunas at the royal village, and given whatever useful information the council had gathered from traders or spies. After that it was up to the commander, and there might be very little further communication between the king and his men until they returned. (Shaka, having des-

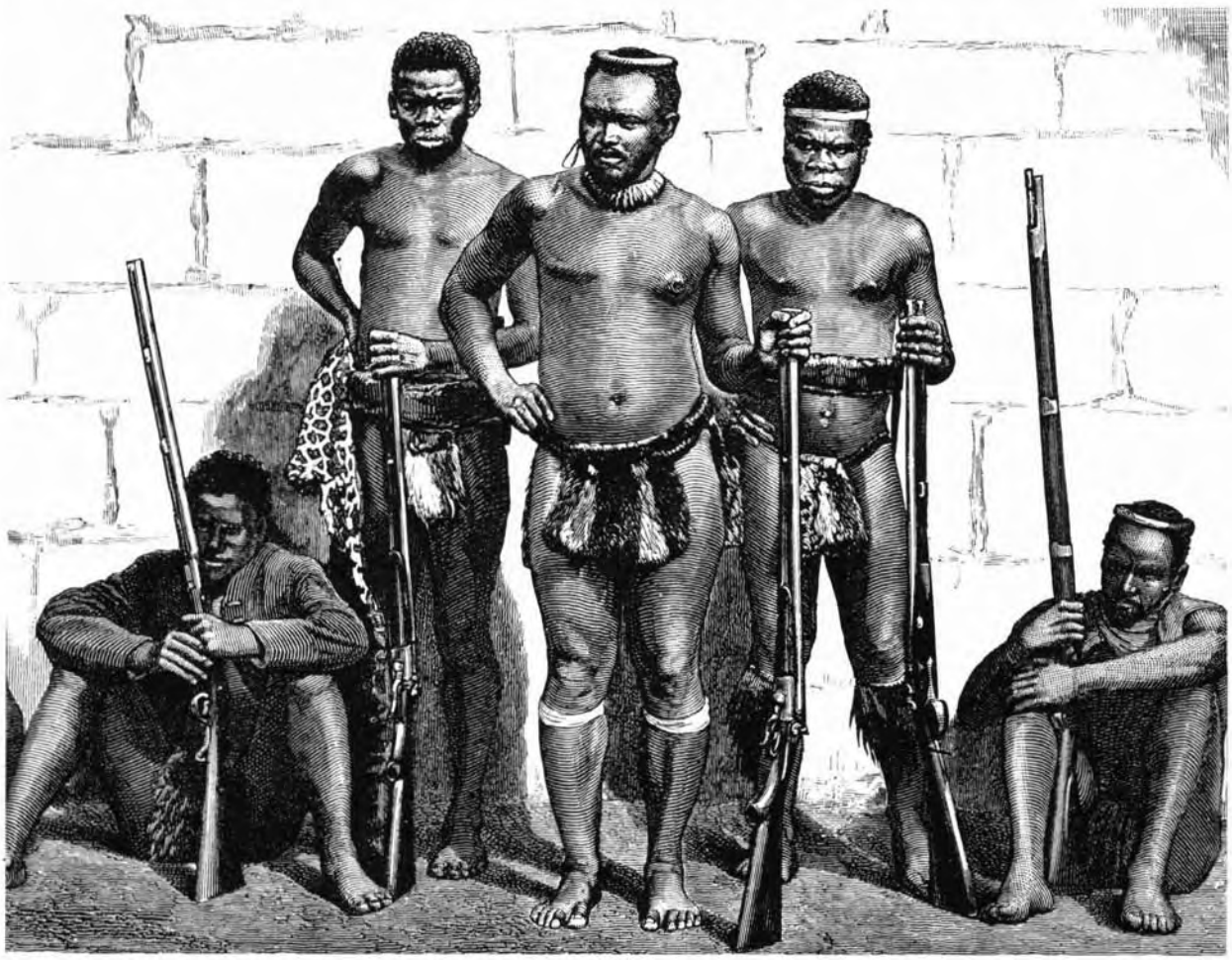
patched his entire army to the north against the Ndwandwe in 1828, knew nothing of their progress for months, and was in fact assassinated without having heard of the failure of their mission.)

On the march an impi (army) lived on whatever food it had brought, or took from the villages that it passed. Any vessels taken and used for eating or drinking were methodically broken afterwards as a precaution against witchcraft.

Temporary shelters of reeds or grass were erected at night, and in hill country (where it can be very cold after sunset) the men slept in a sitting position under the inadequate protection of a skin cloak (kaross) or curled up on their shields. Passwords and countersigns were used.

Most of the army's equipment such as mats, cooking-pots, bags of cheese and calabashes of beer were carried by *udibi*, boys about twelve years old and sometimes younger who accompanied the regiments wherever they went, and who normally expected to join the regiment to which they were attached when they came of age. The *udibi* marched to left and right of the main body of the army, sometimes as far as three miles away in open country, and thus made useful scouts as well as a supply-train. Fanatically loyal to their regiments, they fought among themselves at every available opportunity over fancied insults, and were even known to haunt the field itself at the height of battle on the pretext of supplying their men with water, but actually snatching a spear or two in the hope of winning a little premature glory for themselves.

In hostile territory ten companies, about 500 men, would be detached from the main body and ordered forward ten or twelve miles as an advance guard. Scouts, *izinhloli*, in twos and threes were sent ahead of the advance guard, and the presence of the enemy was immediately communicated to the



Dabulamanzi; from a photograph taken at the 'coronation' of Cetshwayo.

main body by runner.

The Zulu were probably the most mobile foot-soldiers in the world. Shaka had seen the delaying effect of the ox-hide sandals worn by the Mthethwa and their enemies, and had insisted on his own regiment discarding them to go permanently barefoot. There is a well-known account of how he swiftly 'hardened' the feet of his first Zulu regiments by mustering them on a thorn-strewn parade ground, calling for a hard-stamping war-dance, and ordering his executioners to kill any man who flinched or complained. His troops never reverted to footwear, and their mobility became legendary—they were used to covering an astonishing fifty miles a day, and launching an attack almost immediately at a flat run.

The common impression that they disliked attacking at night is not supported by the record. In Shaka's time they did so more than once, and at Rorke's Drift continued the assault on the station till almost dawn. Another erroneous belief—that the Zulu preferred to wait for the rising of the morning star before attacking—is quickly disproved by a little knowledge of astronomy. They undoubtedly regarded the first days of the new moon as good times for a campaign, but they might have been less sanguine at Isandlwana had they known that a partial eclipse of the sun was taking place unseen beyond the cloud-cover during their assault.

The Zulu did not often use boats, and were limited to crossing rivers at convenient fords. They occasionally made rough rafts of burnt trunks lashed together, but as a rule even quite dangerous torrents were crossed *en masse* with arms linked—as was done near Rorke's Drift in 1879, when the Buffalo River was swollen by recent rains.

Drawn up for battle, the impi formed the crescent-shaped formation shown here. The positions of individual regiments in the crescent varied according to decisions made by senior commanders after reconnoitring the field; but generally the horns were formed from young agile ('black') regiments, whilst the most experienced ('white') regiments formed the chest. To these Shaka added 'loins'—a reserve of men ready to reinforce the chest if necessary, who were kept sitting to conserve their strength, and with their backs to the enemy to avoid undue excitement, as their commanders kept an eye on the situation.

An important reason for placing the young men in the horns—apart from their agility—was that unmarried men were considered to be less vulnerable magically, and possessed of more battle-power. Even when a 'black' regiment occupied the extreme left or right wing there might be some older men in the ranks, and they were accordingly kept to the side of that regiment nearest the centre. In a regiment of the chest, the youngest men occupied its left and right flanks.

So well-drilled in these arrangements were the Zulu that even when called out on parade at their barracks each man instinctively went straight to his place according to his age and marital status.

The Outbreak of War

When Sir Bartle Frere became Governor of the Cape in 1877, he had already been persuaded that war between the colonists and the Zulu was inevitable. South Africa had been plagued for decades by both African and European inter-tribal conflicts, and the shock-waves set up by the explosive expansion of Shaka's kingdom had not yet died down. A dreary succession of small but expensive 'Kaffir' Wars had yet to be concluded, and to make matters worse the years '76 and '77 had seen a widespread drought.

Federation under a centralised government was Frere's aim. Theophilus Shepstone, appointed Secretary for Native Affairs in 1856, had used his position to overawe Cetshwayo, and also to negotiate a kind of coexistence with Natal; he now

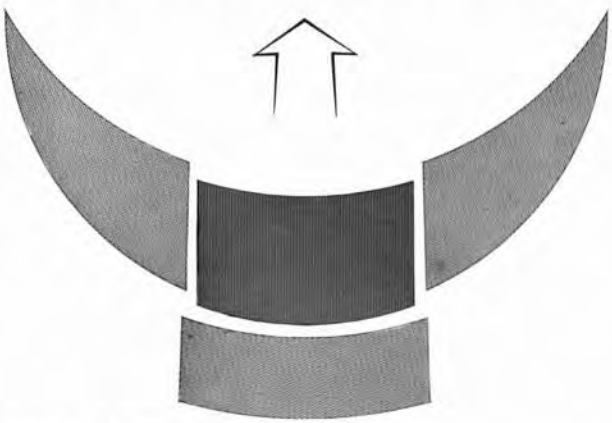


Diagram of an impi.

became Administrator of the Transvaal, and over the disputed border issue he threw his weight against the Zulu on behalf of the Boers. Frere saw the Zulu as a standing threat, and required little excuse to call for a military solution. Although a commission of enquiry examined the problem of the disputed territory and found on behalf of the Zulu, he was already preparing for forceful annexation.

Thesiger, Lord Chelmsford, arrived in South Africa in March 1878 with the 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment, mostly raw recruits, whose sister battalion had been campaigning in the Kaffir Wars since 1874. By September he had persuaded Frere to apply to the home government for more troops, and his plans for an invasion of Zululand were well advanced.

Cetshwayo meanwhile had no idea of the intentions or even the fears of the British. His army was large, perhaps 50,000 men in all, and many were untried youngsters of recent intangas. A great many were also unmarried because of the general tradition established by Shaka that *ikhehla* could be conferred as a reward for prowess in battle—and there had been no battles for years. They had a strong motive for wanting a conflict, and indunas would experience no difficulty in calling the nation to arms.

An internal squabble between two regiments, the uThulwana and the inGobamakhosi, led to the disaffection of the uThulwana's *induna* Hamu, the king's half-brother, who withdrew to the north-west with many of his men. Some men died in the disturbance, and missionaries in Zululand passed on reports that lost nothing in the telling, confirming impressions of Cetshwayo's tyranny.

The final straw on the strained back of Zulu-European relations came in July 1878 when a party of Zulu pursued some errant women across the border, carried them back and killed them. The Lieutenant Governor of Natal protested, but Cetshwayo replied that the women were guilty and deserved to die—anyway, they were his subjects and had been executed on Zulu soil, not in Natal.

The findings of the commission were ignored until, at a meeting in December 1878 on the Tugela River, the Zulu induñas first learned that it had found in their favour, but that Chelmsford notwithstanding was making some impossible demands of their king. They could not be persuaded to relay these terms, and even the minor Zulu official who was finally saddled with the task did his best to avoid it. By the time Cetshwayo was actually informed of the demands the allotted time for compliance had almost run out, and Chelmsford was already preparing to cross into Zululand.

The Invasion Plan

Chelmsford's invasion plan was simple and sound. He divided his forces into four columns, and placed three of them at widely separated points on the borders of Zululand, holding the fourth in readiness at Middle Drift on the Tugela River.

In this way he could advance on Ulundi, Cetshwayo's royal village, from three directions, and with each passing day the columns would be better placed to reinforce each other if need be. The Zulu were highly mobile and might launch their own invasion of Natal through the gaps—and the fourth column's task was to prevent such a thing happening. Chelmsford could call upon a further force in the Transvaal in extreme emergency.

The northern, 'left' column under Col. Evelyn Wood consisted of:

The 90th Regt; the 1st Bn. 13th Regt.; 80 mounted infantry; a battery of six seven-pounder guns, and two rocket tubes.

The Frontier Horse under Maj. Buller, with 70 Transvaal Rangers, 80 Baker's Horse and 40 Kaffrarian Vanguards:

Weatherley's Border Horse, and Uys's 30 Transvaal Burghers:

70 Mounted Natal Natives, over 500 N.N.C. and some hundreds of disaffected Zulu organised in two battalions.

Wood's instructions were to cover the left of the central column, divide the Zulu, and draw off their forces to the north.

The eastern, 'right' column under Col. Charles Pearson consisted of:

A battalion of the 99th Regt.;

the 2nd Bn. 3rd Regt.; a troop of mounted Imperial Infantry.

A mixed mounted force of rifles from Durban, Alexandra, Stanger, Victoria and Isipongo under Maj. Barrow, and the Natal Hussars. Capt. Beddoes commanded a company of Natal Native

Pioneers, and Maj. Graves, two battalions of the 2nd N.N.C.

With the column were 200 invaluable men of the Naval Brigade handling two seven-pounder guns and one Gatling gun.

Pearson was to approach Ulundi from the south-east via Eshowe.

The centre column, under Col. Richard Glyn, consisted of Glyn's own 24th Regt., 1st and 2nd Bns.,—'B' Coy., 2nd Bn. remaining at Rorke's Drift.

The Natal Mounted Police, and Mounted Infantry.

120 irregular cavalry, made up of the Natal Carbineers, the Buffalo Border Guard, and Newcastle Rifles, under Dartnell.

N. Battery of the 5th Brigade R.A. (six guns) and two rocket-tubes.

3rd Regt., N.N.C. under Lonsdale, and the Natal Native Pioneers under Nolan.

Its object was a direct advance eastwards on Ulundi.

The reserve column under Col. Anthony Durnford (R.E.) consisted of:

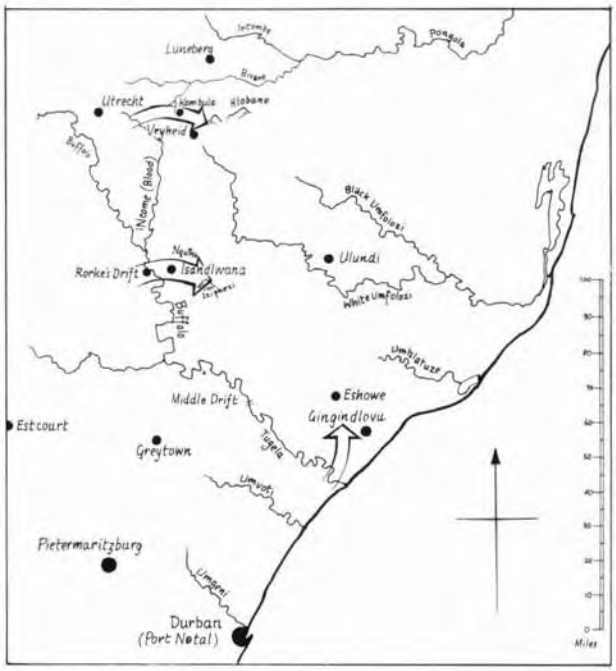
1st Regt. N.N.C.

Sikali's Native Horse, and

1 rocket battery.

Durnford's instructions (unwillingly obeyed) were to stay in Natal and await orders.

On the 11th January 1879 Chelmsford ordered Glyn's column across the Buffalo at Rorke's Drift. Pearson waited till the following day, but Wood had crossed the Blood River one day before the ultimatum expired. All three columns had initial successes, but were soon to face unnerving reverses.



The First Invasion.

Isandlwana

Glyn's column, with Chelmsford and his staff, arrived at Isandlwana on the 20th January, taking all day to assemble and make camp. This was to be temporary, for entrenchments were hardly practicable in the stony ground, and Chelmsford chose to rely on extensive scouting and adequate warning of any attack. He reconnoitred in person, dissatisfied with his information on Zulu movements.

On the 21st Chelmsford sent Dartnell to the Nkandla Hills with mounted volunteers, and Londsdale south-east to the Inhlazatshe Hills with nearly all of the N.N.C. (16 companies). By late afternoon the two units met in the hills near the Mangeni River. Dartnell had encountered some Zulu, and Chelmsford had given him permission to mount an attack. That evening it was clear that the Zulu were assembling in force to the east, perhaps as many as 1500 men. Dartnell attempted a mounted patrol, but confronted a large Zulu force which tried to encircle him. The patrol hastily retired and he sent to Chelmsford for reinforcements, which were refused. On the same day Chelmsford once more reconnoitred part of the Nquthu, but at 3 p.m. his vedettes could only report having seen some mounted Zulu scouts.

The main impi was indeed approaching, and on the morning of the 21st it had only just moved from where Chelmsford had imagined it to be. It had moved slowly—on Cetshwayo's orders—and was in need of supplies; the small detachments seen by the British were engaged in searching for cattle. Meanwhile the Zulu were resting, only too willing to wait for the forthcoming new moon of the 23rd which would signal an auspicious time for an attack.

By the night of the 21st Chelmsford was at last convinced of their presence somewhere in the Nkandla Hills or the east part of the Nquthu

Plateau, and he realised that Dartnell's troop would need help after all by morning.

It meant dividing his force in this way:

With him he would take 6 companies of the 2nd/24th, four guns under Col. Harness, and 1 company of Natal Native Pioneers.

In camp he would leave 5 companies of the 1st/24th and 1 company of 2nd/24th under Col. Pulleine, two guns under Brevet-Major Stuart-Smith, 100 Natal Mounted Police and Volunteers, and 600 Natal Natives.

He despatched an order to Durnford to move his men from Rorke's Drift to the camp, and sent the mounted infantry under Russell on another reconnaissance of Iziphezi Hill.

A delightfully frank illustration of the appearance of some members of the 1st Bn. 24th after a time in South Africa. The patched and battered uniforms are a sharp contrast to the smart outfits of the 2nd Bn. who joined them in 1878. Old hands like these put a band of hide round the stock and barrel of the Martini-Henry rifle for greater comfort. The drawing comes from a contemporary issue of the *Boys' Own Paper*, and was one of several light-hearted sketches done on campaign by W. Lloyd.

All was now movement, and by dawn Chelmsford and his reinforcements were on their way across the plain.

The next step was to order up his remaining forces and establish a new camp near Dartnell's bivouac, but events overtook him. At the one point that Chelmsford had not scouted, near the edge of the Nquthu Plateau at the north east corner of the plain, the main impi had arrived unseen and spent the night. It consisted of a dozen regiments—about 20,000 men.

Durnford arrived in camp, his column spread along the track from Rorke's Drift, and concluded from the confused reports coming in that at least some of the Zulu were moving *eastwards* to attack Chelmsford's rear. He therefore moved out almost at once to cross the plain, with Sikali's mounted natives and the Edendale men, the slow-moving rocket battery and a company of the 1st N.N.C.

The Zulu might now have waited till the next day before attacking, by which time Pulleine and all his command might have moved east to join Chelmsford, but on the Nquthu Plateau, at about 11 a.m. a small scouting party stumbled on the very centre of the Zulu impi, hidden in a ravine four miles along the escarpment.

At once the Zulu were committed. Their *izinhloli* (scouts) had informed their commanders of the British moves and the position of the camp, and it was only necessary to give final directions to the regiments as they emerged from the ravine and surged west along the plateau.

The 'horns and chest' formation was to be used to trap the British against the side of Isandlwana: the left horn, made up of the inGobamakhosi, the uMbonambi, and 3,000 young men of the uVe, racing south across the plain to enclose the British right; the right horn, consisting of the uDududu and uNokhenke, continuing west across the front of the British companies on the spur on its way to the rear of the mountain to cut off any retreat across the saddle; and the chest, comprising the umKhulutshane, umHlanga, isAngqu and umCijo, pouring down from the plateau to cover the remaining mile to the British centre. The uThulwana, uDloko and inDluyengwe had been held back by their commanders, and were now to form the traditional reserve 'loins', circling far behind Isandlwana to await the outcome.

Isandlwana, 22nd Jan. 1879. From the painting by C. E. Fripp. (National Army Museum)

Once Pulleine became fully aware of the extent of the attack he formed his companies into a rough, angled line with C, F and A companies of the 1st/24th under Lts. Younghusband, Mostyn and Cavaye falling back from the spur to form a north-facing side, and E and H of the 1st/24th and G company of the 2nd/24th under Lts. Porteus, Wardell and Pope forming its east-facing side. At the angle were two companies of the N.N.C.

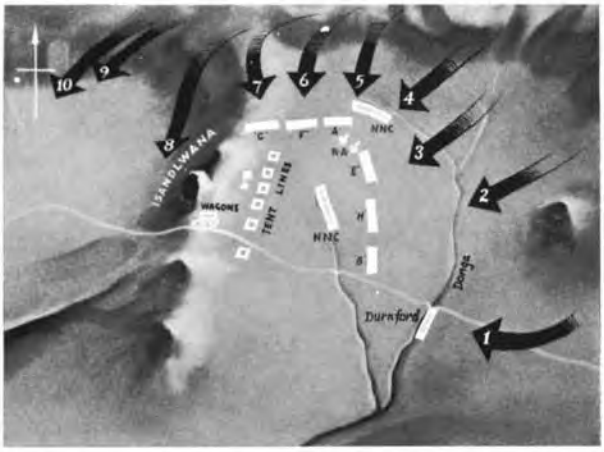
It was just after midday.

The Zulu had completed the best part of five miles, mostly at a loping run, and they now faced steady volleys which pinned them down 500 yards from their enemies.

Durnford had turned his men around, and from the shelter of a wide donga (dried up water-course) was holding back the tip of the left horn. Raw's men and a troop under Lt. Roberts were doing what they could to slow down the advance of the Zulu at the head of the spur. Stuart-Smith mounted his two guns behind the angle of the line and began firing at the Zulu who were still climbing down from the plateau.

However, the British were deployed too thinly and too far from the camp's centre, and as the men continued to fire steadily into the oncoming Zulu they began to run out of ammunition. Runners were sent back for more, covering nearly a mile in the round trip. The volley fire slackened and in places stopped. The N.N.C. at the angle, with only thirty firearms between 300 of them, turned and ran towards the saddle, whereupon the Zulu chest headed by the umCijo rose from under their shields, yelling the war-cry 'uSuthu!', and charged forward into the gap. With the isAngqu they swung to left and right against the rear of the Imperial troops, and before many of the British had time to fix bayonets or form squares A and F companies had been annihilated. E company soon followed, and Wardell and his H company died to a man as they withdrew towards the tents, fighting hand-to-hand all the way. G company almost managed to reach the saddle before it too was wiped out.

Durnford's men in the donga also ran out of ammunition, and were forced to mount and gallop for the saddle in a desperate bid to hold open a line of retreat to Rorke's Drift. Some fugitives, mostly N.C.O.s and men of the panic-stricken Natal Native



Isandlwana, 22nd Jan. 1879. KEY: 1. uMbonambi. 2. inGobamakhosi. 3. uVe. 4. umHlanga. 5. umCijo. 6. isAngqu 7. umKhulutshane. 8. uNokhenke and uDududu. 9. inDluyengwe 10. uThulwana and uDloko.

Contingent, managed to get away, but by then the Zulu had rolled over the British line into the tent area and up to the wagon park on the saddle. By late afternoon there was not a single defender left alive in the camp.

Pulleine died after handing the Queen's Colour of the 1st/24th to Lt. Melvill. Durnford died defending the saddle behind the fugitives. Stuart-Smith, badly wounded, was among the last who attempted to cross to the Natal shore of the Buffalo River west of Isandlwana, and died at the hands of the inDluyengwe. 581 men and 21 officers of the 24th had died, and by the end of the day, in different parts of the extended battlefield, the death toll was well over three thousand men, Zulu and British.

Rorke's Drift

The Zulu reserve of three regiments had not been used at Isandlwana, except for the action of the iNdluyengwe in harrying those fugitives who came over the west side of the saddle and attempted to cross the stream in a ravine at its foot.

The rest of the reserve (usually identified as the Undi corps), 1500 of the uThulwana and about 2000 of the uDloko, by mid-afternoon of the 22nd January were already on their way westwards along the left (north) bank of the Buffalo towards the Oskarberg Mountain and Rorke's Drift. The iNdluyengwe, over 1000 strong, crossed the river, reassembled on the Natal side and moved westwards, firing farmsteads on their way. Almost within sight of the Drift five miles away, the uThulwana and uDloko crossed to the Natal side to join them; all three regiments continued upstream, led by Dabulamanzi and another *induna* on white horses.

The men of B Company, 2nd/24th, who were stationed at Witt's house at the Drift had been alerted by the first fugitives from Isandlwana, and under the direction of Lts. Chard (Royal Engineers) and Bromhead (24th) had taken what steps they could to fortify the post with bags of mealies and large biscuit boxes. One of the two buildings was being used as a hospital, and some of the patients were just able to wield rifles at hastily constructed loopholes. There were others present (including Witt, who was the owner of the buildings), but they fled as soon as the Zulu had been sighted; at the Drift itself were some mounted natives who took their chance to withdraw to the west when they saw the impi approaching upstream. A detachment of N.N.C. at the station,

Imperial Troops on the site of Isandlwana, at some time after the end of the war—probably in 1880. The unit is unidentified, but may be the 3rd Regt. Bandoliers in place of ammunition pouches; light-coloured trousers and white gaiters. (Killie Campbell Library)

Lts. Chard (Royal Engineers) and Bromhead (B coy 2nd/24th).

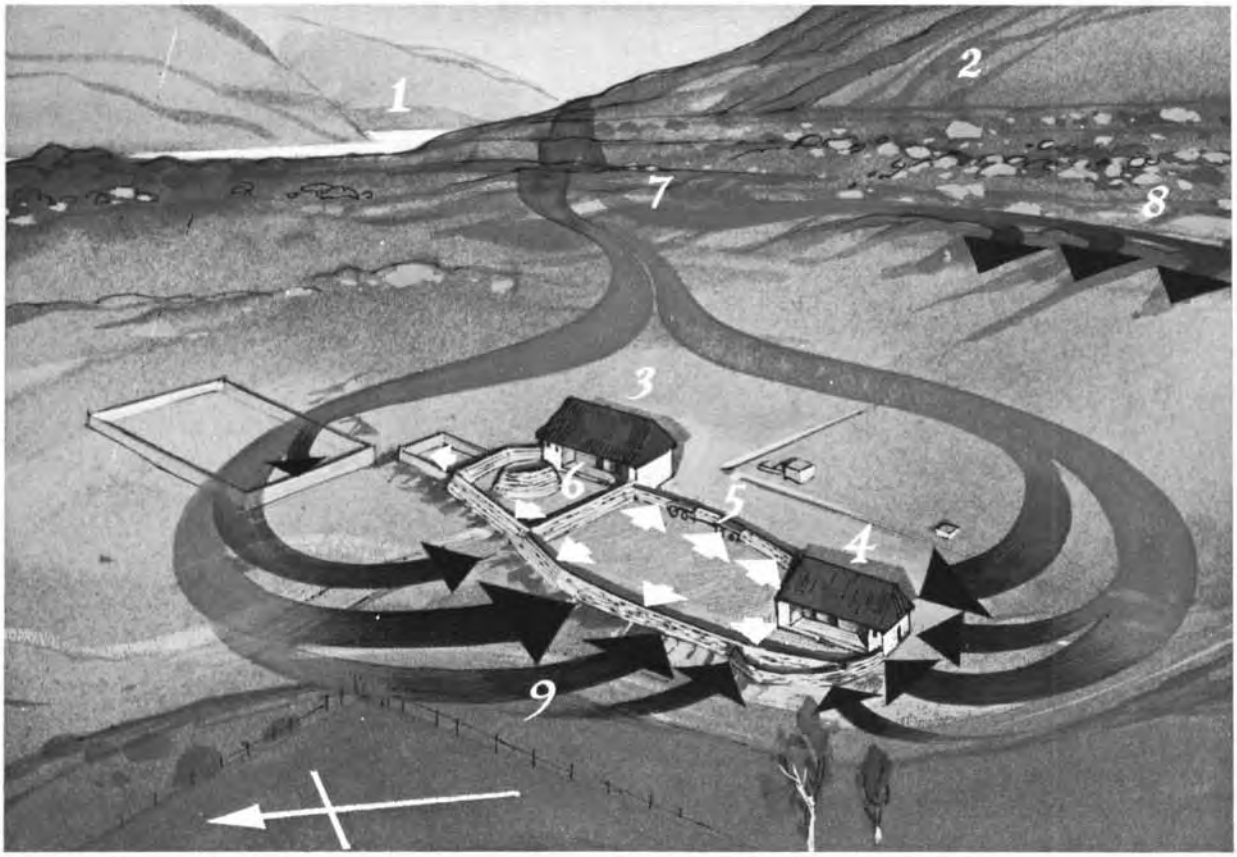
with their irregular officer Stephenson and their European N.C.O.s, leapt over the wall of mealie-bags and fled.

Chard, the senior officer present, now commanded a mere 140 men, of whom only the 81 members of B Company were fit Imperial infantry, and he had to halve the size of his makeshift redoubt by flinging up a wall across the middle. His precious time ran out: a lookout on the roof announced the arrival of the Zulu, meaning that all subsequent movements would have to be made under fire.

The uThulwana and uDloko advanced at a run along the foot of the Oskarberg behind the station, and turning right swept around the west side of the hospital. The first volleys crashed out from the loopholes and over the mealie-bag wall connecting the two buildings, and those Zulu who had rifles climbed among the rocks of the lower terraces of the Oskarberg to return the fire from above. Fortunately for the defenders their marksmanship was very bad.

The iNdluyengwe encircled the eastern end of the station and closed the ring at the north side above the track, and a general assault began. Dabulamanzi dismounted to organise the attack as well as he could, sending wave upon wave of his men against the lowest, most vulnerable section of the mealie-bag wall. His control was precarious, however, for although the regiments had formed the reserve that traditional tactics demanded, they had had to be held back from the assault on

Defence of Rorke's Drift, 1879. Looking south-west: the hospital building, centre background, its roof ablaze, patients being transferred to storehouse at left. Lt. Bromhead centre pointing; Lt. Chard bareheaded, holding a rifle at right. Chaplain Smith, in dark coat, handing out ammunition. Surgeon Reynolds, centre foreground, with a dog. Oskarberg, left distance. (National Army Museum)



Rorke's Drift. KEY: 1. Buffalo River. 2. Oskarberg. 3. Storehouse. 4. 'Hospital'. 5. Mealie-bag walls. 6. Final redoubt. 7. Direction of Zulu approach. 8. Snipers. 9. Main Zulu assault.

Isandlwana by Dabulamanzi and others in order to do so. They had obeyed unwillingly, actutely aware that the other regiments were on their way to a resounding victory, and by midday were conscious only of having taken no part in it beyond the inglorious business of slaughtering running men. Some of the uThulwana had in fact slipped past their indunas in the morning's headlong rush down from the Nquthu plateau, and had joined with the umCijo in the centre. Their fellows at Rorke's Drift were keen to have their own victory at any cost. All Dabulamanzi could do was urge his men into concerted attacks instead of wasting their lives in individual rushes.

Sniping by the iNdluyengwe from the Oskarberg terraces increased and began to take its toll. The wall in front of the hospital could not be held much longer, and at about 6 p.m. Chard pulled his men back, closing off a further section of the redoubt with bags and boxes. The men in the hospital were holding off the Zulu they could see, but were all too well aware of others who were against the walls out of sight or round the blind side of the hospital, battering at the doors. Room by room the occupants withdrew, their slow progress marked by acts of extraordinary bravery.

Outside the hospital, the roof of which the Zulu had now set on fire, they would have to cross the unmanned gap between the two buildings under a covering fire from Chard's men in the storehouse area. Two men who were themselves badly wounded helped the surviving patients and defenders out of a tiny window onto the ground. Two patients died crossing the yard.

The blazing roof of the hospital lit up the scene as Chard now set his men to building a new smaller redoubt in front of the storehouse. The Zulu continued their assault with redoubled fury, joined by snipers who had come down from the Oskarberg and by all those who had been sheltering in or behind the hospital. The defenders were now under fire from Zulu at close quarters outside the cattle enclosure, and were forced to fall back on the small redoubt, turning and firing continually at the Zulu

pouring over the abandoned walls behind them. They managed to make a small sortie to seize a water-cart in the yard.

By 10 o'clock all the defenders were inside and completely surrounded. The Zulu assault continued for another two hours at high pressure, but still the redoubt and the storehouse were held.

After midnight the assault began to slacken. The Zulu were now having to struggle over heaps of their own dead to get at the wall. Very few of them had eaten properly since the morning of the 19th, and since then they had covered many miles on foot. Their exhaustion was becoming obvious, but their determination to wipe out the post kept them on their feet in the darkness for another two hours, until their desperate faltering charges finally came to an end. Still they kept up a dangerous fusillade of shots at any head that moved above the wall silhouetted against the embers of the hospital roof, until 4 o'clock on the morning of the 23rd.

At last, after nearly twelve hours of continuous rifle fire, there was silence.

As dawn broke the remaining seventy-odd men at the walls were astonished to find themselves hemmed in among piles of Zulu dead. The ground was covered with spent cases. They fully expected another attack.

At 7 o'clock the impi reappeared, but only to rest briefly on the mountain-side before rising and moving round onto the track and away to the east. . .

In recognition of their bravery in this extraordinary action, eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded to the defenders, a list headed by Lts. Chard and Bromhead.

When Cetshwayo learned the extent of the Zulu casualties at Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift he said 'An assegai has been plunged into the belly of the Zulu nation'.

Eshowe

Col. Pearson's column crossed the lower reaches of the Tugela river into Zululand on the 12th January 1879, established a fort on each side of the crossing, and made for Eshowe. Progress was slow, and it was already the 22nd before he had completed the crossing of the Inyezane River only fifteen miles further north.

Immediately beyond the river his column began to climb the centre spur of three which led north to Majia's Hill and the high ground around Eshowe. Almost at once his native scouts clashed with an advance party of Zulu on the spur to his right, and Pearson drew his men up along the spur to face an impi over six thousand strong which now attempted to encircle him.

Pouch and belt of 2nd/24th regt. 1879. (National Army Museum)

Gatling gun, with sailors from H.M.S. 'Shah'. Lower Tugela River, 1879. Royal Artillery gunners, and battery officer at left.

The man (centre) in front of the gun is probably a Natal volunteer. (Killie Campbell Library)

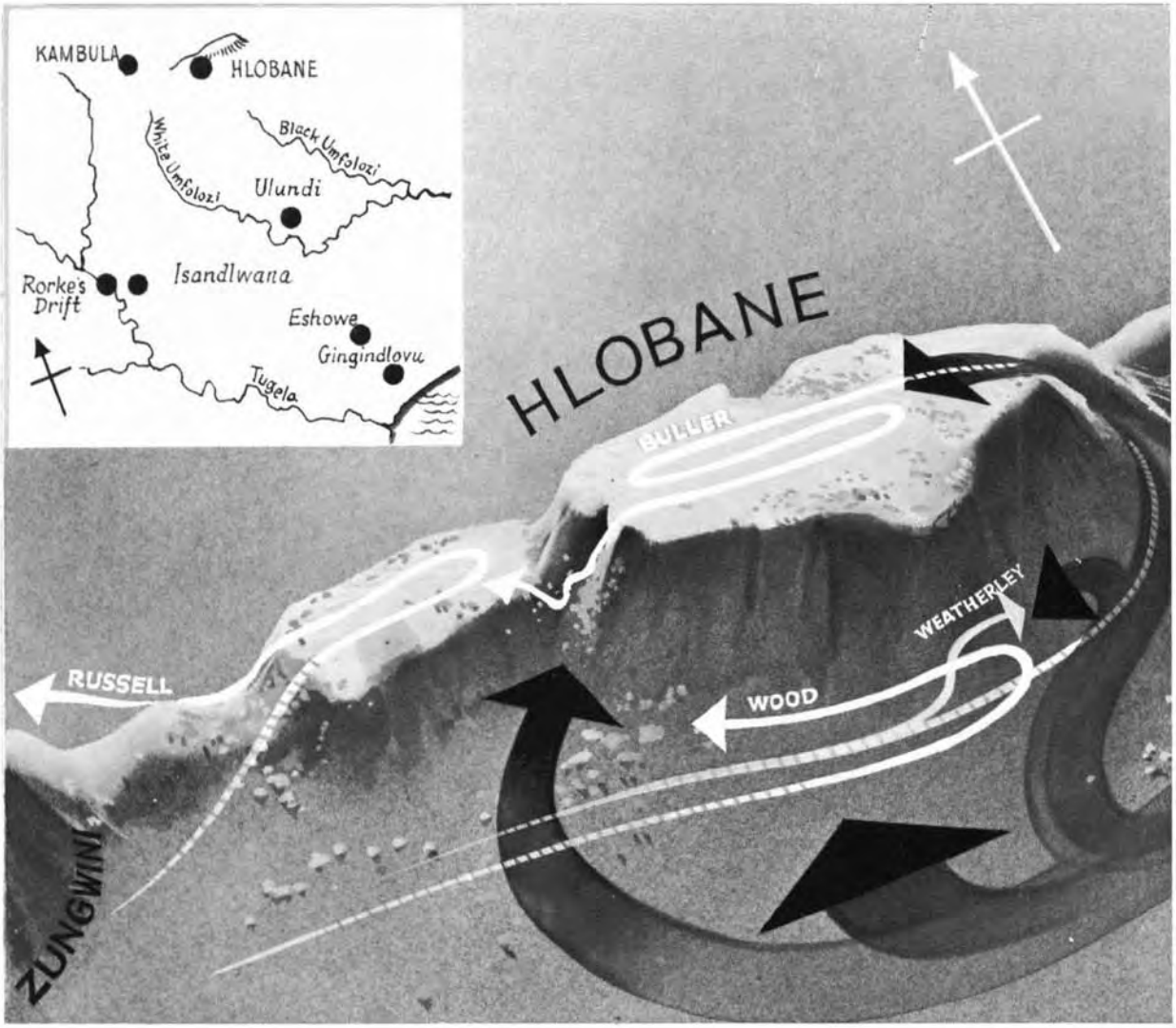
The impi included the iQwa, iNgulube, and umXapho regiments, with the iNgwegwe and inSukamngeni under the *induna* Matyiya. Their movement had been well planned as a trap, but Pearson's scouts had sprung it prematurely. With the column was a naval contingent which manhandled a Gatling gun into position above the western horn of the impi and used it with deadly effect. Their seven-pounder guns tore great gaps in the eastern left horn, and then—swinging round to the north—drove back Matyiya's men of the chest. The action was soon over, and Pearson continued his march, occupying the empty mission station at Eshowe, but uneasily aware of increasing numbers of Zulu around him. On the 28th he received a message from Chelmsford telling him to expect 'the whole Zulu force' down upon him. In an unfortunate spot with only 1300 men he was now to be besieged—but after their initial assault above the Inyezane River the Zulu reacted slowly to the presence of the column. Pearson ordered the building of a strong redoubt at Eshowe, and was given ample time to complete it to his satisfaction—its strength was finally such that one report said it would have withstood artillery, let alone spears and muskets. The men settled down to await relief, although it was two months before they learned that a force was on its way.

Hlobane

The invasion had come to a halt. On the Lower Tugela Pearson's column was beseiged. The centre column no longer existed as such, and Chelmsford was busy with an extensive redeployment of his forces.

Wood was ordered to demonstrate in order to relieve the pressure on Pearson. Any line of march to the south-east was endangered by the abaQulusi, an independent Nguni clan, a thousand of whom occupied Hlobane, a flat-topped steep-sided mountain east of the Umfolozi. Accordingly he launched an assault simultaneously to rid himself of a strategic nuisance and fulfil his superior's requirements.

At dawn on the 28th March, after a stormy night, Buller with Uys and his Boers, 156 Frontier Light Horse, 70 Transvaal Rangers, 80 of Baker's Horse, and 277 N.N.C. on foot, plus seven gunners and a rocket tube, ascended the eastern end of Hlobane; meanwhile Maj. J. Russell led 80



mounted Natives of the Edendale Contingent, 240 N.N.C. and 200 of Hamu's men onto the neck at the western end. After watching the start of the operation Wood followed Buller's tracks, but met with sniper-fire from mountain caves in which the Zulu had managed to keep their antiquated flintlocks dry, and was forced back. The Border Horse under Weatherley, who arrived late at the foot of the ascent, could not be persuaded to clear the way, so Wood tried the western ascent instead.

Buller had some success on the summit, and drove the abaQulusi cattle towards Russell's end, but the way down turned out to be dangerously steep for horsemen and Buller turned about, directing his rearguard to return to Kambula from the east end.

At that moment he saw on the plain below—approaching rapidly from the south-east—a huge Zulu impi fully 20,000 strong. Cetshwayo's regiments had had two months following Isandlwana in which to cleanse themselves and to be strengthened by drafts from units which had not seen action, also for some of the less seriously wounded to recover. From the king's viewpoint, the Zulu had dealt with their enemy's 'chest', and halted the right horn at Eshowe; now it was time to deal with the left horn.

Buller hastened to get his men down, and at the same time to warn his rearguard (without the advantage of his view) of the new peril. But the impi moved too swiftly. As soon as the indunas were aware of the presence of their enemy on Hlobane

the impi turned to face north, its van becoming the left horn, its rear the right, the whole force being large enough to encircle the mountain if need be.

Trapped against the mountain, a mixed force of 83 Border and Frontier Horse were decimated and the Zulu bounded on up the eastern track towards Buller, who withdrew once more to the steep western drop. Cattle, horses and men now converged on the one narrow defile just as the Zulu left horn reached its foot.

The confused and bloody action that followed could only be called a rout. Buller, acting with characteristic bravery, did what he could to rescue his force. Russell's men had withdrawn to the north-west just in time, and Wood took refuge on Zungwini, the next large hill to the west; he had lost 15 officers and nearly 100 men, with many wounded. Two-thirds of the N.N.C. with Buller had been killed, and the Border Horse had virtually ceased to exist, having lost 66 officers and men and all its horses.

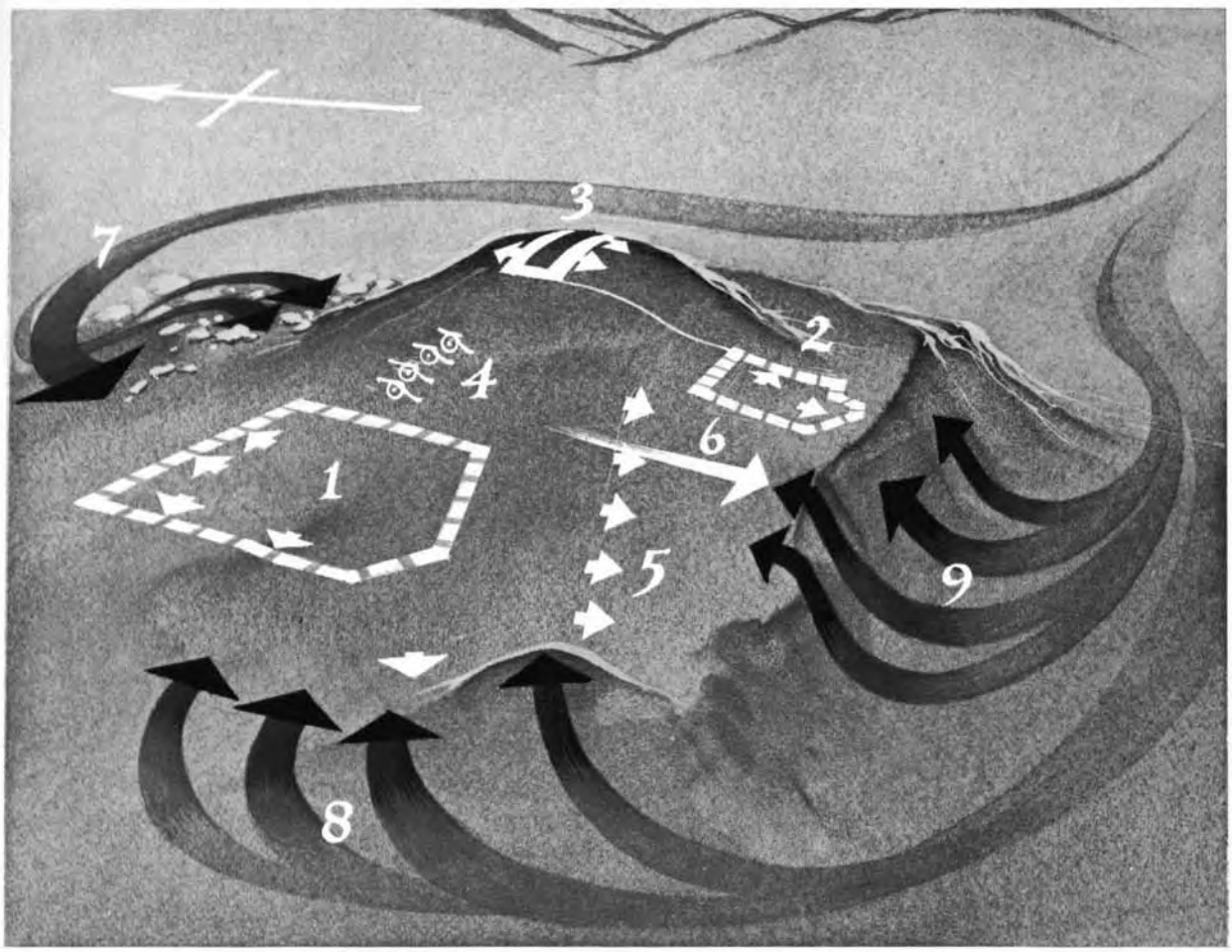
That night the Zulu bivouaced on the neck between Hlobane and Zungwini, and Wood retired to Kambula to take stock of the situation.

On the 29th March the Zulu, now joined by the abaQulusi, moved west towards Kambula.

Kambula

The impi was under the overall command of Tshingwayo, but its tactics were the responsibility of Mnyamana Buthelezi. Just after 11 a.m. on the morning of the 29th March it came within sight of the camp at Kambula, where Wood's troops were drawn up on a low east-west ridge in two laagers and a redoubt.

The Zulu right was made up of the uNokhenke



Map of Kambula. 29th March 1879. KEY: 1. Main laager. 2. Cattle laager. 3. Redoubt. 4. Artillery. 5. Infantry. 6. Bayonet charge. 7. Zulu right horn. 8. Zulu left horn. 9. Zulu centre.

and uMbonambi with the umCijo at the tip of the horn. The inGobamakhosi formed the left horn, and in the centre the umHlanga, with the uDloko, uThulwana and inDluyengwe, were reinforced by the exultant abaQulusi from Hlobane.

The chest approached from the south, the left horn from the west, and the right horn by an encircling movement from the north. Although encouraged by their success at Hlobane, the warriors were not in good condition, most of them not having eaten for three days, and some with fresh wounds from the carnage of the 22nd January.

Soon after midday Wood sent Buller and his horsemen on a sally to provoke the right horn into attacking prematurely, a move that brought an instant response. Buller's men only just regained the laager in time.

The main assault came at about 2 o'clock by horns and chest together. The Zulu were thrown back on the north side by field guns and volley fire, but managed to gain a foothold on the ledges to the south, from which they were temporarily dislodged in a bayonet-charge by two companies of the 90th. Attacks and repulses continued into the afternoon as the inGobamakhosi climbed onto the ridge again and again, only to be swept back by crossfire from the main laager.

Four hours after the battle had begun the impi withdrew without the victory it had so confidently expected, having lost some 2000 dead and many more wounded.

Wood's casualties were 18 killed and 65 wounded, of whom 10 were to die later.

Gingindlovu

The Zulu regiments which had tried to halt Pearson above the Inyezane were not those despatched by Cetshwayo to fall upon the relief force. It is an extraordinary fact that for this hazardous assignment he sent Somopo at the head of the uVe, inGobamakhosi, umHlanga, uMbonambi and umCijo. Although newly reinforced with youngsters, all of these regiments had borne the weight of Imperial rifle fire at Isandlwana, and three had been at Kambula with the uNokhenke. Acting as lieutenant to Somopo was Dabulamanzi, and with him were the uThulwana who had lost hundreds of men at Rorke's Drift.

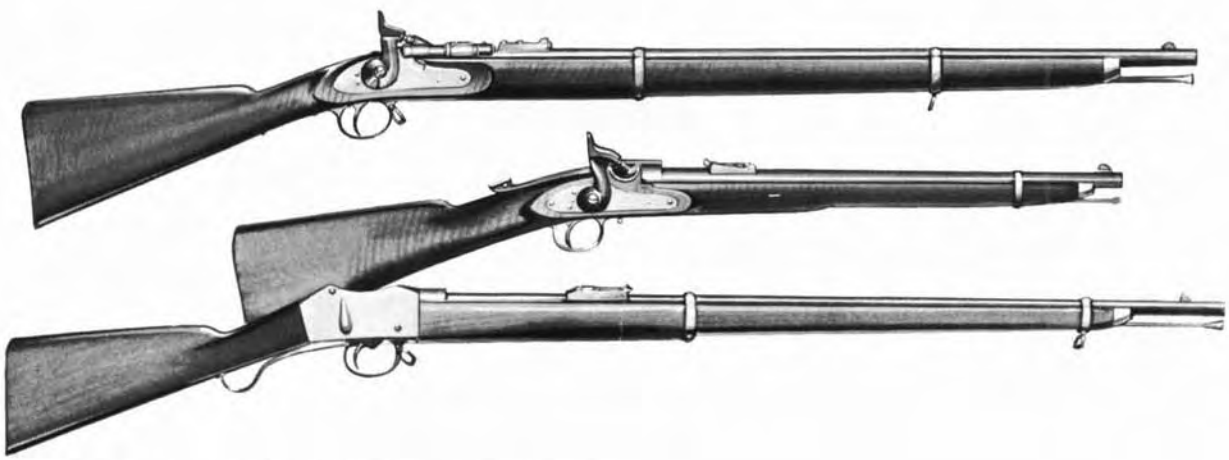
The relief force was led by Chelmsford himself. It hugged the open coast-lands until April 1st and then struck inland towards Eshowe. Somopo knew he must strike before it reached the fortress, and so did Chelmsford. Near the abandoned village of Gingindlovu the British commander drew up his entire force in a square on a slight rise.

Naval Contingent, 1879, somewhere in Natal, and otherwise unidentified. (Killie Campbell Library)

General Lord Chelmsford and his staff scouting the approaches to Ulundi, 1879. Sketch by Melton Prior. (National Army Museum)

On the 2nd April Somopo sent his 10,000-strong impi through the dawn mists against the north side of the laager, as two horns raced to encircle it. Dabulamanzi was in command of the right horn. An eye-witness spoke of the Zulu's running-halting-running advance and the rhythmic humming sound they made as they came on. They were not only in full regimental gear but were using the ritualised charge of Shaka's days.

The result of the action was predictable. The Zulu hurled themselves against the square and were thrown back by massed rifle and Gatling gun fire, leaving nearly 700 dead in the trampled grass. As soon as it was obvious that the assault had failed



RIFLES: Top: 1866 Snider breech-loading .577. Centre: 1861 Westley-Richards. Bottom: 1871 Martini-Henry.

Map of Ulundi, July 4th, 1879. KEY: 1. Advance of Imperial troops 2. Chelmsford's square 3. Zulu army before 9.0 a.m. 4. Zulu attack. 5. Zulu reserve behind Nodwengu barracks, and reserve attack. 6. Cavalry charge.

and that they were retiring, the Natal Mounted Kaffirs led by Maj. Barrow, and a troop of mounted infantry, were let out of the square to harry the fugitives and raise the death-toll to over a thousand.

Chelmsford had begun to avenge the Imperial dead of Isandlwana, but for the present he was content to relieve Pearson and return to Natal.

The Second Invasion

In May 1879 the British army invaded Zululand for a second time. There had been no time for the Zulu king to reorganise his army, raise new regiments, or persuade his indunas that their old tactics were inadequate against the new threat.

Over their heads, and possibly even without some of them knowing, Cetshwayo despatched envoys to the British in June. Chelmsford's demands were precisely what would be expected of a British officer in the field, tough but—in his view—generous: i.e. the return of the guns taken from the field at Isandlwana, together with the army's stores and cattle, and the token surrender of a Zulu regiment in order to break the morale of the rest who, he was convinced, were kept in the field out of fear of their despotic king and dread of being considered cowardly.

Cetshwayo could not comply with these demands however much he might have wished to do so. His army was not what Chelmsford thought it to be. Despite many of the regiments being shattered, their morale was still high, their ignorance of their enemy's strength was almost total, and there were entire regiments of young men whose brand-new spears had not yet been 'washed' in blood.

In desperation Cetshwayo tried to contact his erstwhile supporter Shepstone through a Dutch trader, but again Chelmsford had already ordered his troops across the borders.

The British were in two columns, the northernmost under Chelmsford himself moving eastwards towards the upper reaches of the White Umfolozi River, and another under Col. Crealock crossing into Zululand over the lower Tugela River with instructions to approach Cetshwayo's village at Ulundi from the east.

By the end of June Cetshwayo, having sent other equally unsuccessful delegations to the British, realised that a final conflict was inevitable. His indunas would still not consider the surrender that Chelmsford demanded, and when Cetshwayo tried to send some of the royal cattle to the British commander as a gesture of compliance, his ultra-loyal black-shield regiment the umCijo, who were guarding a ford on the approaches to Ulundi, turned them back.

The British reached the White Umfolozi on July 1st after a long detour to the south, and were now only a few miles from the royal village. The Zulu, now fully aware of their danger, were converging on Ulundi from all over the land in small parties and in regiments, and British scouts were con-

Unit of unidentified Imperial troops in Zululand, 1879, possibly 80th Regt. with Wood's 'Flying Column' in the 2nd Invasion. (Killie Campbell Library)

stantly engaged in minor skirmishes.

Crealock's column, already dubbed 'Crealock's Crawlers', had made its cautious way as far as Port Durnford—not really a port but only a convenient stretch of negotiable sand on an otherwise awkward coastline—leaving a string of forts behind them and having experienced considerable difficulty in crossing many rivers. However, it was now possible to be supplied by sea instead of by the difficult land route.

Chelmsford's crossing of the Umfolozi was disputed by Zulu snipers, and a large detachment of the Light Horse under Buller was sent across to clear the way and to scout the approaches to Ulundi. The new drafts that made up the 1st/24th regiment were assigned to garrison fortified laagers—much to their disgust—whilst the remainder of the column crossed on 4th July and marched on the royal village.

Ulundi

The formation adopted by Chelmsford was born of bitter experience and a deep determination not to be taken at a disadvantage whatever the Zulu might do. His force was arranged in a huge square that held its shape as it marched slowly across the Mahlabatini plain towards Ulundi, the cavalry at the front and in the centre, and the wagons carrying only those supplies needed for a ten-day period. At any time during its advance the square could be halted, and was already in position to face the expected Zulu encirclement.

The leading side of the square consisted of five companies of the 80th Regt. in four ranks, and the sides were made up of the 90th and 94th on the left, in column of twos, and the 1st/13th and the 58th on the right. Two companies of the 94th and two of the 2nd/21st formed the rear side of the square. With the addition of twelve fieldpieces and two Gatling guns with their crews, there were over 5,300 men on foot and 899 mounted men. About mid-morning Chelmsford halted his formation on a rise within sight of Ulundi. The Zulu were massing all around the edges of the plain and converging on the square. Buller's mounted men came upon a regiment, the young inGobamakhosi, and were engaged in a running fight all the way back to the square which grudgingly opened to let the horsemen in.

The Zulu attack on the square was not so much a planned tactical movement as an instinctive response to the presence of an obvious enemy in the midst of an open plain. They had acquired a large number of guns and ammunition at Isandlwana but were unable to use them properly without training. The Martini-Henry rifle had a strong recoil and, unless held in a way which had to be learnt and practised, consistently fired high. The danger that Zulu firearms could have represented to the British at Ulundi was nullified by poor marksmanship, although a few lucky shots found their mark and the surgeons inside the square were kept busy from the time the action began.

The 20,000 warriors who were closing in from all sides were relying on their shields and stabbing-spears and raw courage alone. There was little organisation, but some regiments were recognisable as such, the inGobamakhosi, umCijo, uDloko, uDududu, umXhapho, and amaKhwenkwe. Also

Durban Volunteer Artillery 1879. A group of officers relaxing (those seated are on small folding cane-bottomed chairs, like miniature deck-chairs). The usual variety of uniform details, kepis with decorated crown and button, and an unidentified badge. Cross-belt with silver whistle-chain and badge-plate; cuffs with Austrian knots in white (or perhaps silver) braid; braid shoulder-straps, and piping down edge of jacket-front. Officer at left with plumed cocked hat. (Killie Campbell Library, Durban)

The arrival of the Zulu king under heavy escort at the camp of Sir Garnet Wolseley, August 31st 1879. Behind the king are his wives and the induna Mkobana. The king is draped in a damask table-cloth. To left and right of the picture are large detachments of the 60th Regt. Very clearly shown is the rolled great-coat, with Glengarry under the straps; canteen behind the waist, and back-pack behind the hips. White canvas helmet-covers without the regimental badge. (Originally from the *Graphic*; National Army Museum)

The iNdabakawombe were not involved in the 1879 War, being nearly sixty (although other even older men did see action), and in all probability lower in Cetshwayo's favour than in Mpande's—perhaps even disbanded by then. With them had been incorporated two younger age-groups, intangas, of the 1846–51 period, the uNongamulana and the umKhuze, who had at first been brigaded with the umSikaba and umZwangwenya under the collective name amaPhela—'cockroaches'. The shields of the amaPhela were all-red, but those who joined the iNdabakawombe would have exchanged the all-red shields of the amaPhela for the white ones of the senior regiment.

A.2. uGibabanye

Formed in 1821. 'To oust the others'. One of the crack regiments of the legendary Shakan period, the nearly all-white shield denoting veteran status. Headquarters near Dukuza, on the umVoti River. Brigaded with the uFojisa, imFolozi, and iNdabankulu, all formed before 1826. On campaign in 1822 against the dissident chief Mzilikazi, they were badly mauled, although the uGibabanye broke through the enemy impi in an attempt to capture its indunas.

The shield is the *isihlangu*, the large size of Shaka's time, the pole surmounted by civet skin. The figure wears a black fur head-covering, surmounted by crane-feathers, with ostrich feathers pointing backwards behind; leopard skin head-band and side-pieces. White cow-tail fringe at front and black at back. A small *insimba* (genet) loin-covering with longer tails behind over goat-skin flap. White cow-tail fringe around legs. The *insimba* and leg-fringes were worn by most regiments although both varied in length and fullness from unit to unit. At the very least, a warrior wore the plain *umutsha* or the *insimba* covering, and simple ornamentation of some kind, and never went anywhere without some sort of weapon even when off-duty.

A.3. Thimuni

Shaka's nephew (from a painting by Angas). A good indication of the riot of head-decoration common in Mpande's time on festive occasions. Above the back of the *isicoco* (headring) a bunch of brownish-red feathers, probably bustard, and two bunches of grey finch, *ihuna*, feathers, and a bell-crane tail-feather at each side. White woollen streamers and bead-work ear-decoration, *inqinyana*, at each side. Generally speaking little beadwork was worn by married men, and for a headringed man Thimuni is wearing an unusual amount. The colours favoured originally were black, white and red, but with increased trading blues and yellows later became common.

B.1. inGobamakhosi

'The bender of Kings'; formed in 1873 of men born between 1850–53 and stationed at Old Ondini with

the even younger uVe. Their strength at Isandlwana was about 6000 men. In the attack on the camp they were drawn up well apart from the uThulwana, with whom they had a standing feud over women which began some years before.

In 1878 Cetshwayo gave the uThulwana permission to marry the female *intanga* that had been assigned to them, the inGcugce. The uThulwana, who had been kept waiting for a long time, were now men in their forties, but the girls of the inGcugce had been enrolled at about the same time as the inGobamakhosi, and most of them were in their late teens and had already formed pre-marriage partnerships with the men of the younger regiment. When the uThulwana, adorned with new headrings, appeared to claim their brides, most of the girls had run off into the bush and could not be found. There was a fight in which the uThulwana set about every man not wearing a headring, and the inGobamakhosi attacked every man with one. These embarrassing events were reported to Cetshwayo, who however took no really effective measures to sort things out, and whenever there was contact the quarrel flared up afresh.

The man shown here never received formal permission to marry before the disaster at Ulundi in 1879, and wears no headring.

The leopard-skin head-band supports cheek pieces and back pieces of green monkey skin (the 'green' monkey is so called from its yellowish-grey fur). Side-plates of stiff white cow-hide shaped like an 'H' are attached over the ears; and from the centre of each (sometimes from the bottom ends) hang two white cow tails. Just above the side-plates are bunches of widow-bird (sakabula) tail feathers pointing backwards.

The figure is shown in war-dress, without the upright ostrich plumes that would be worn on the front of the headgear for parades. He is wearing an unadorned *umutsha*, or loin-covering of dressed calf-skin slung from a beaded belt, the design of which indicates that he is prepared for marriage. On the belt is a small charm of powders in a bag. The shield shown is but one of several colour-schemes used at the same time by both the inGobamakhosi and the uVe: black, black-and-white, red, and red-and-white. This variety was due to the regiment having been formed from several intangas who had had to wait unusually long to be enrolled, from 1867–1873.

B.2. iNdlondlo

Formed in 1857; 'the poisonous snakes'; also called the uShisiswe, 'Land burner'; sometimes *imidwayimba*, because of the high proportion of tall men in its ranks.

Together with the uDloko in 1876 they were involved in the chastisement of a Tonga village. Having 'washed' their spears both regiments were now technically entitled to be given permission to marry. The girls from the very large inGosho *intanga* that had been formed in 1857 were now either married or too old for marriage, and so a younger *intanga* was selected for them. This caused trouble, however, and there were some executions as a result, which in due course helped to justify the outbreak of war in 1879.

The tall figure (B.2a) shown here is of an unmarried man, wearing the *umnyakanya*, a ball of black widow-bird feathers made up on a basket-work base and carefully trimmed, that often denoted an unmarried regiment. To the left (B.2b) is shown the revised headdress of crane-feathers denoting *ikhehla* (married) status.

In both cases a pair of ostrich feathers forms part of the parade dress. Round the head is a band of otter-skin tied behind so that the two ends hang down to the back of the shoulders. The younger man wears an ear-plug of maize-cob; the older man carries a bone snuff-spoon and ear-pick in his ear-lobe.

The shield shown is speculative; but as the connections between the iNdlondlo and the uDloko were close, their shield-colours were probably similar, although the uDloko shield is recorded as red with a single white patch.

B.3. udibi boy

A combination of cadet and beast of burden, with few privileges other than to be near their idolised men-folk on campaigns, and many duties and responsibilities. During his time as an *udibi*, a Zulu boy from about twelve years old (some are said to have been as young as six) till his formal enrolment in a regiment at about twenty, went through the hardest and most thankless part of his military

1 iNdabakawombe
2 uGibabanye
3 Thimuni

1 inGobamakhosi
2 iNdlondlo
3 udibi boy
1
2
3

1 uMbonambi
2 umKhulutshane
3 umCijo

1 isAngqu
2 iNdluyengwe
3 uThulwana

1 Lord Chelmsford
2 Officer of the 1st Dragoon Guards
3 Trooper, 17th Lancers
4 W. H. Longcast, Chelmsford's Interpreter

1 Infantry Officers, line regiments
2 2nd/24th (Warwickshire Regiment) 'B' Coy. Private
3 Infantry Officers and men; headgear
4 91st Highlanders; Private

1 Natal Mounted Police; Trooper
2 Officer and Man; Natal Native Horse
3 Boer Volunteer
4 Alexandra Mounted Rifles
1
2
3
4

1 Frontier Light Horse
2 Royal Durban Rifles
3 The Natal Native Contingent
1
2
3